



To: Committee Considering Bill C-205

The Canadian Coalition for Farm Animals (CFA), established in 2002, is an organization dedicated to promoting the welfare of animals raised for food in Canada, through public education, legislative change and consumer choice. We are not an abolitionist organization. Our organization promotes farm animal welfare and does not condone trespassing or any other illegal activity regarding animal agriculture or any other industry.

As a director of CCFA, I am greatly concerned about Bill C-205, which would amend the Health of Animals Act making it an offence to enter, without lawful authority or excuse, a place in which animals are kept if doing so could result in the exposure of the animals to a disease or toxic substance that is capable of affecting or contaminating them.

Canada already has some of the worst animal welfare laws in the western world. No Bill has ever been passed in the House of Commons or the Senate that would protect farm animals from abuse and exploitation in these profit driven industries. The National Farm Animal Care Council "codes of practice" are only suggested practices and not legally binding. The huge majority of the members of NFACC are those in the animal agriculture industry itself. The Canadian legal system miserably fails farm animals. The fact that the government doesn't regulate or monitor farm animal welfare conditions, has contributed to a crisis of animal cruelty that is angering Canadians. If companion animals or wildlife were treated to the same practices as farm animals, the public would be in an uproar and the violator would be charged under the criminal code with animal cruelty. Law must apply equally to all, including those who raise and slaughter animals for food. Laws against trespassing already exist, yet Bill C-205 specifically seeks to target those trying to peacefully expose the reality of the animal use industries that cause systemic cruelty and suffering to animals daily.

There is a need to ensure investigative journalists and employee whistleblowers are able to document and publicly expose animal abuse and other unlawful or unethical conduct without fear of legal action against them. In gathering footage for these exposés, individuals follow all requirements of the job and pose no threat to biosecurity. Bill C-205 would create a law preventing animal agriculture industries from being subjected to outside investigations or public exposure of their practices. It would hide animal abuse and prevent whistleblowers from performing their vital role in exposing the horrific treatment of farm animals that occurs every day. Instead of passing laws to protect farm animals, the government is attempting to conceal the cruelty. The clear implication of this bill is that the businesses that raise and slaughter food animals have something to hide.

There have been numerous undercover investigations done on farms and in slaughterhouses across Canada. All of these were exposed on National TV and in print media. Some of these undercover investigations were precedent setting.

2012, an undercover investigation at Puratone pig farm in Manitoba, moved Canadian consumers to demand better treatment of pregnant pigs. As a result, in 2014, the NFACC introduced a new code banning the use of gestation crates.

2016 an undercover investigation on a Canadian egg farm, caused the public to put pressure on food companies to demand cage free housing. As a result, the NFACC was forced to phase out the use of battery cages.

2017, an undercover investigation at Chilliwack Dairy Farm in BC, for the first time in Canadian history resulted in a company being convicted for the acts of animal cruelty committed by its employees.

Ontario recently passed the Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act, 2020. During the debates on the bill, MPP John Vanthof, NDP Agriculture Critic, former Dairy Farmer and nephew of Ontario Agriculture Minister Ernie Hardeman, stated "Those hired under false pretences, has nothing to do with biosecurity" "Those hired and trained, follow protocol and then leave" "I believe there is a time and a place for whistleblowers" "If farmers and processors are doing the right thing now, why do you have to over reach".

This was MPP Vanthof's final comment on TVO Agenda, during the debates "I'm with the minister on protecting the farmers, protecting the industry, but I also want to protect the confidence of consumers, because at the end of the day, farmers are in a battle for the hearts and minds of consumers, and anything in the end to hurt that confidence, will hurt farmers."

After having research conducted into CFIA reporting on disease outbreaks at Canadian farms, Animal Justice recently released a new report showing that every known disease outbreak on a Canadian farm in the past 20 years has been caused by farm owners and operators. None were caused by animal advocates (via occupation, bearing witness, or any other activities). This questions biosecurity as justification for Ag-Gag laws.

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